

**Erika Haynes, Windham Town Council**  
**Written Testimony**  
**Appropriations Committee Public Hearing**  
**Thursday, March 24, 2011**

I would like to thank the members of the Appropriations Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 1195. My name is Erika Haynes and I am a member of the Windham Town Council.

Senate Bill 1195, An Act Concerning School Finance Reform, addresses how the state funds education. This bill specifically replaces the current Education Cost Sharing Formula with a student-based funding model.

The current system is inequitable. Students in towns with similar demographics may get drastically different amounts of state aid per pupil. The Connecticut Commission on Educational Achievement reported that "Due to years of alterations, caps and other adjustments, the ECS formula now has little correlation with the actual cost to educate a child."<sup>1</sup>

Senate Bill 1195 alters education funding to a new student-centered model, one that not only bases funding on the student's success factor (or learning needs), but also accounts for a town's ability to pay for education locally in the funding model.

Now is the time to alter the funding model. In a difficult fiscal year, beginning to change the process of how the state funds over \$2 billion in education from an unclear, unfair process to a transparent, student-centric model is essential, and is the very essence of fiscal responsibility. Taxpayers will be able to understand the funding process, and connect the dollars to student needs.

Senate Bill 1195 also facilitates public school choice, and clearly and fairly funds children that choose to attend a school out of district. This is essential to create a truly student-centric funding model. Those who are concerned about a significant loss of students to a district will have recourse within Raised Bill 1195, in the form of a district reimbursement fund. If the money does not move with the student, we fail to truly fund that individual student's needs and fail as well to put that child before a system.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to submit testimony about Senate Bill 1195. Our students have waited far too long for equitable funding. Taxpayers have waited far too long for an education funding system that is transparent and student-centered. I urge the committee to support this bill and set a new priority for funding education in Connecticut: all Connecticut students.

---

<sup>1</sup> A Report from the Connecticut Commission on Educational Achievement: Every child should have a chance to be exceptional. Page 20.